# Fairbury's Interesting 100 Year History Revealed

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## First Lutheran Sermon Here July 19, 1908

The history of Trinity Lutheran Church of Fairbury, Illinois dates back to July 19, 1908. It was on that day that Rev. Christian Helmreich, then pastor of the Lutheran church of Crescent City, Illinois, made an entry in his diary which read: "Preached first time in Fairbury. The small group, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Saathoff, Mr. and Mrs. John Heins Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Sebo Mehrings and Herman Mehrings held services in the Free Methodist church every other Sunday afternoon at 2:00 o'clock. Mr. and Mrs. H. K. Meyer and baby, Agnes and Louis Weber united with the group shortly. Pastor Helmreich continued to serve the congregation until the spring of 1910. It was at that time the synod ruled that the Fairbury congregation must be served by the Chenoa pastor. At the same time the congregation rented the Baptist church.

Rev. Lorch served the parish until 1919, when he was replaced by Rev. Suhren. Shortly after the death of Rev. Suhren in 1919, Rev. Ramme was called. Due to the ill health of his wife it was necessary for Pastor Ramme to leave, and Rev. F. Bunge was called.

Under the pastorate of Rev. Bunge we have record of the first congregational meeting on Feb. 25, 1935 held in the Baptist church parlors. The congregation grew slowly, and services were conducted every other Sunday afternoon in German and English.

September 21, 1936 the congregation bought the Christian Science Society building located on the corner of Walnut and Fifth streets. The purchase price was $750. At that time we had thirty-six communicant members. Because our pastor served four congregations it was necessary for us to continue worship services every other Sunday, but it was now possible for us to have morning service.

A Sunday school was organized. Officers of the first Sunday school were: Supt. Mrs. John Eilers, Assistant Supt. Andrew Hlavas, Sec. Leora Gerdes, Treas. Mrs. Sam Haab. The teachers were Mrs. Haab, Mrs. Eilers, Miss Gerdes and Mrs. Meisenhelder. There were 19 pupils enrolled: Doris Meisenhelder, Mary Ellen Mehrings, Marvin Haase, Carl Bardley, Harlen Wessels, Dallas Wessels, Arnold Eilers, Francis Haase, Alfred Haase, Paul Eilers, Bernadine Nagel, Phyllis Haab, Carl Eilers, Margaret Mehrings, Marvin Nagel, Ogreta Wessels, Marie Eilers, Elizabeth Mehrings and Marjorie Canute.

The building was improved by removing the steel ceiling, putting in beams and celotex squares. The walls were papered and the furnace was removed to the basement. The kitchen chairs were exchanged for pews from the Lodemia church and we were given some pews by George Mowery. An altar, pulpit and lecturn were dedicated.

In 1940 Rev. Bunge was called to serve a church in Chicago. Rev. Carl H. Amelung was called to serve the Chenoa parish. It was at that time that the synod decided that the four churches should have two pastors, so Fairbury was served by the Chenoa pastor, and we were now able to have services every Sunday morning. Our congregation continued to grow. In 1945 a Hammond Electric Organ was purchased, and in 1949 new pews were bought to replace our old ones. We were beginning to feel the need for more room.

Rev. Wittig was called to replace Pastor Amelung who accepted a call to Indianapolis, Indiana. Our church attendance continued to increase and our Sunday school was crowded to overflowing. After much thought and planning it seemed the time had come when we must provide more adequate facilities for our church. In 1956 plans were made to conduct a building fund canvass. Our present location was sold to the members of the Church of Christ. Ground was purchased from Mr. Kunezi, and on Easter Sunday, April 21, 1957 ground breaking services were held. Just fifty-six days later, cornerstone-laying ceremonies were held. August 18, our church was far enough along that we were able to conduct services in our church for the first time.

By the grace of God we have grown from a few families to more than one hundred communicant members. Trinity Lutheran is an active congregation with its various organizations. We have a Lutheran Brotherhood for the men, and the women have the Willing Workers. The Sunday school numbers more than fifty members, and we have a Junior Mission Band for the children. Each summer Daily Vacation Bible School is conducted. Confirmation classes are held by the pastor for both adults and children.

God’s richest blessing has been with us in a wonderful way for these many years. May He continue to bless us that we may continue to worship Him and serve our community better.

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